

January 2019

Happy New Year! I hope your Christmas and New Years get-togethers and celebrations were happy and meaningful.

The growing season and harvest season of 2018 have been challenging. Despite these uncertainties, the yields turned out great, but sadly the quality of the corn is affected by the moulds and toxins produced by the excessively rainy autumn season. If we take a minute and compare our seeming hardships with people in other parts of the world such as Indonesia where a tsunami has recently killed close to 400 people and irreversibly changed the lives of thousands more, our difficulties seem trivial. Many people around the world still go to bed hungry most nights – we're thankful for the work of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and continue to be committed to generously supporting this good cause each fall. We all have a lot to be thankful for and we hope and pray that we will continue to be blessed in 2019 as we have in the past and that this blessing will extend to those many people that are less fortunate.

The December 1st USDA Hogs & Pigs Report put the US hog supply slightly below expectations. Total supply of hogs was up 1.9% but was below trade estimates making it slightly positive news for the market. The main downside of the USDA Report was that farrowing intentions for December through February were up 2.5% from the previous year – slightly higher than expected. It looks like 2019 will continue to challenge pork producers to make a profit.

Jeff Buchanan

Commodities

If looking at overall price changes, commodity markets were reasonably stable during the month of December. Corn was up \$5.00/mt, Soymeal was up \$3.00/mt and Wheat was up \$7.00/mt. Almost all of the price increases can be attributed to the full 2 cent drop in the CDN\$ against the US\$. In my mind, this significant drop in the CDN\$ can be attributed directly to non-ag influences. Geo-political issues in the U.S., stock market turmoil, uncertainty in the oil industry and ongoing trade issues are all major factors.

We are also starting to see weather issues in South America starting to have some influence. As is normally the case this time of the year, some areas are a little dry and some areas are too wet. While large crops are still being anticipated, this is something to keep an eye on.

Going forward, we can only hope that the World political climates improve and thus stop having such a major (and unknown) effect on Commodity markets. Favourable weather patterns in South America would also be a blessing.

THE DAIRY TEAM

First off, I would like to thank our dairy producers for your business this past year, and tell you that we look forward to another successful relationship this coming year. We the dairy team at Molesworth will always strive to do our best to keep your herd Healthy, Productive, and Profitable.

SAVE THE DATE: Wednesday, February 6th is the date of our annual car tour. There will be more details to follow or contact The Dairy Team for more information.

At this time of year, it is not a bad idea to check your forage inventories and if you feel that you are going to run short of either haylage or corn silage now would be a good time to adjust your ration accordingly. We do not want to run out of either so small adjustments now may help prevent that. This would also be a good time to resample your forages and have all your rations updated with new forage analysis. Always remember to let our dairy team know if what is on our feeding guide is what the cows are actually consuming.

Winter hasn't really hit us too severely yet, but it's a safe bet that it will arrive soon. Consider the winter-specific hazards you may encounter and make sure you know how to control or prevent them as much as possible:

1. Cold stress that can lead to hypothermia and frostbite.
 Wear several thin layers of clothing; make sure you wear gloves and a head covering.
 If you get hot while working, open your jacket but keep your hat and gloves on.
2. Slips and falls – ice, snow, slush, wet surfaces and mud can cause slips and falls.
 A slip on icy, slushy or muddy ground can cost you weeks off work. A slip from a height can cost you your life.
 Clean ice & snow off the soles of your boots.
 Use sand, salt or other de-icing materials on work areas, roads and walkways.
 When walking, have at least one hand free to help you keep your balance and cushion a fall.
3. Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a clear, odourless, tasteless gas. It interferes with your body's ability to use oxygen and can be fatal, even in very small doses.
 When heating an enclosed space, use an indirect-fired heater.
 Operate engines outdoors when possible. If operating indoors is required, make sure the area is well ventilated and monitor CO levels regularly with a gas detector.

(Source: IHSA.caMagazine Vol. 12 Issue 3)

“Call your vet”. How many customers have heard me say THAT three times during a conversation regarding animal health? I've never tried to pass myself off as a veterinarian – I see what I see and enjoy brainstorming with customers about any current issue on their farm. In the end though a conversation needs to happen between the client and the veterinarian where animal health is potentially a factor. In the new world we live in of needing a prescription for virtually all feed medications I have already witnessed more of these conversations happening – and that is a good thing for everyone. I don't believe there was a lot of unnecessary use of medications, happening before; however, if these conversations lead to less medication usage or a change in medications from time to time due to veterinarian advice, that too is obviously a good thing for everyone – the animal, the producer and the industry as a whole.

The Customer Service Reps fielding calls for feed orders and myself have all tried to facilitate getting scripts whenever necessary and there is a system in place at the mill that alerts us to when a prescription is soon to expire. We have worked hard to ensure medicated feed can be delivered when needed and I believe our customers have had minimal interruption in medicated feed deliveries. I would like to tip my cap to the veterinarian community and support staff for all the time and organization that went into preparing for the big change effective December 1 and since then in churning out a LOT of scripts in a timely manner – it has been crucial to enabling feed companies to deliver medicated feed when the customer wants it!

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As we start this New Year of 2019, we at Molesworth Farm Supply renew our commitment to you as a feed purchaser, to do our best to handle your feed requirements with integrity and in an environmentally friendly, courteous and professional manner. We are sincerely appreciative of the business you favour us with – Thank you!

Sincerely,

Ron

“Today, give a stranger one of your smiles – it might be the only sunshine he/she sees all day.”